

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 16152 250322Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----060344 250324Z /61
O R 250245Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4462
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16152

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM CHRISTOPHER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: (OVIP: CHRISTOPHER, WARREN), PGOV, IN, PK, BG, NP
SUBJ: INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBORS

1. IN THE INITIAL MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER DESAI'S PRIVATE SECRETARY AND FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA (REPORTED SEPARATELY), I WAS SOMEWHAT PUZZLED BY THE GREAT EMPHASIS PLACED UPON INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS NEPAL, BANGLADESH, AND PAKISTAN. THIS SAME THEME WAS EVIDENT IN LONGER CONVERSATIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE IN THE AFTERNOON (ALSO REPORTED SEPARATELY). AS THE DAY PROGRESSED, I LEARNED MORE ABOUT THIS APPROACH AND HAD TIME TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH AMBASSADOR GOHEEN AND HIS ABLE STAFF, PARTICULARLY DCM SCHNEIDER.

2. ON REFLECTION, IT SEEMS PLAIN THAT THE DESAI GOVERNMENT ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO U.S. RECOGNITION OF ITS LEADING ROLE ON THE SUB-CONTINENT AND ITS INTENTION TO STRESS ASSISTANCE, COOPERATION, AND MUTUAL BENEFIT IN PLAYING THIS ROLE. SUCH AN APPROACH CONTRACTS WITH THE MORE MUSCULAR APPROACH OF MRS GANDHI'S GOVERNMENT WHICH STRESSED INDIAN POWER AND NATURAL NEGEMONY AS THE BASIS FOR ITS PREDOMINENCE IN THE SUB-CONTINENT. WHILE SOME OF THE LATTER SENTIMENT MAY WELL REMAIN, IT WAS NOT
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EVIDENT IN MY TALKS AND IS CLEARLY OF LESS IMPORTANCE. THERE WAS ALSO LESS CONCERN ABOUT AND HOSTILITY TOWARD PAKISTAN.

3. IN ADDITION, THE PREVIOUS INDIAN PREOCCUPATION WITH THE GREAT POWERS, U.S., USSR AND CHINA) SEEMED TO HAVE GIVEN WAY TO EMPHASIS ON RELATIONS BETWEEN AND AMONG SUB-CONTINENT STATES. THE EMPHASIS OF THIS GOVERNMENT ON GENUINE NON-

ALIGNMENT APPEARS TO BE AN ASPECT OF THIS NEW APPROACH.

4. SO LONG AS THIS NEW APPROACH REFLECTS MUTUAL INTERESTS AND
COOPERATION IN SOLVING COMMON PROBLEMS AND ESCHEWS ANY
ATTEMPT AT HEAVY-HANDED DOMINATION, IT DESERVES ENCOURAGEMENT.
I TRIED TO FOLLOW THIS TACK IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS AS WELL
AS MEDIA CONTACT.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 25-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
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